

Russell Baker, Pulitzer- Winning Times Columnist and Humorist, Dies at 93

By Robert D. McFadden

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Russell Baker, the two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author whose whimsical, irreverent “Observer” column appeared in The New York Times and hundreds of other newspapers for 36 years and turned a backwoods-born Virginian into one of America’s most celebrated writers, died on Monday at his home in Leesburg, Va. He was 93.

The cause was complications of a fall, his son Allen said.

Mr. Baker, along with the syndicated columnist Art Buchwald (who died in 2007), was one of the best-known newspaper humorists of his time, and The Washington Post ranked his best-selling autobiography, “Growing Up,” with the most enduring recollections of American boyhood — those of James Thurber, H. L. Mencken and Mark Twain.

In a career begun in a rakish fedora and the smoky press rooms of the 1940s, Mr. Baker was a police reporter, a rewrite man and a London correspondent for The Baltimore Sun, and after 1954 a Washington correspondent for The Times, rising swiftly with a clattering typewriter and a deft writer’s touch to cover the White House, Congress and the presidential campaigns of 1956 and 1960.

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